

# Busy Swiss Post May Includes Russia Joint Issue

This May Switzerland released 12 stamps in six different issues, most of them with May 8 first days.

**Pro Patria, Museums:** Leading the way was the latest Pro Patria issue, which is used to raise funds for Switzerland's approximately 400 local and regional museums. The stamps picture works that are on display in those museums.

**Cities:** Next we see the set of three stamps on the theme "Cities of Switzerland". This is the third in an three-year series, preceded in



2012 and 2013 with stamps for the six biggest cities and concluding this year with the three "smallest of the biggest nine" cities: St. Gallen, Lucerne and Lugano. Three students from the graphic design course at the Basel School of Design created their own impressions of the three cities.



**Special Olympics:** The Special Olympics also was honored on May 8. Described as the world's largest sports movement for people with intellectual disabilities, it was founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, it is now represented by more than 4 million athletes in 170 countries. Special Olympics Switzerland was established in 1995 and now operates as an independent foundation.

**The Pilatus:** Beautiful scenery is featured on the next issue. Whether you take the panorama gondola, the aerial cableway or the world's steepest cogwheel railway (shown on the stamp), the Pilatus Railways has plenty to offer tourists. The Pilatus is unique and has earned the description "a wonderful point of Europe". The views over the lakes of Central Switzerland, laid out in a star pattern, are unforgettable. The stamp was issued to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Pilatus Railways.

**Renewable Energy:** Switzerland wants to abandon nuclear energy and minimize its consumption of fossil fuels. It also plans to reduce its dependence on energy generated abroad. Various strategies are in place for this energy revolution, which involves plans up until 2050. However, as Swiss Post states, "the plans will only succeed if

the various measures slot seamlessly together, like pieces of a puzzle. With all the renewable energies at our disposal and, not least, if we exhaust the potential for energy efficiency, this goal seems realistic."

**Joint Issue with Russia:** Concluding its busy May, on the 21st



Switzerland participated in a joint issue with Russia celebrating 200 years of almost continuous diplomatic relations. In recent decades, diplomatic relations have taken on a different dimension, and contact between Swiss and Russian people is steadily increasing, thanks to the ever-growing number of reciprocal arrangements in the cultural, higher education, sport and tourism spheres. To mark the milestone anniversary of these ties, the joint issues depict famous clock towers.

Seen on the 100 Swiss franc issue is Berne's clock tower, the federal capital's defining landmark and a tourist magnet. When it was erected at the start of the 13th century, as a fortified tower, the building marked the western edge of the city of Berne. As the city grew, the tower moved closer to the center, where it was no longer needed as a fortification. During the 15th century, it was used as a prison and subsequently as a clock tower, rebuilt from Berne sandstone. From then on, its clock dictated the time for the entire city and became the point of reference for measuring the travel times indicated on the hour stones along the cantonal roads.

In the 16th century, the tower gained its present-day height and a new clock. Beneath this, in the archway, the edicts and ordinances of the City of Berne were posted. The tower owes its national and international fame not only to its eventful history, but also to its special carillon, the ring of bears, lions, a rooster and the god of time, Chronos.

The Kazansky tower depicted on the 140 SFr stamp is the most imposing feature of Kazansky station, one of Moscow's eight largest stations. The station was built in 1862 and, initially, was nothing more than a small timber building without a waiting room or platform. Two years later, the wooden building was dismantled and, in its place, a stone station building was erected. The new station building fell short of increasingly stringent requirements; it was too small and of little architectural merit. When the railway line was extended further eastwards to the large Volga city of Kazansky and passenger numbers swelled, in 1918 work commenced on the construction of the present-day station building. Even after the huge undertaking was completed in 1940, it underwent further expansion, including the clock tower.

The stamps of Switzerland, as well as the issues of 20 other postal administrations at face value may be accessed at the World Online Philatelic Agency, <http://www.wopa-stamps.com/>.

Information also can be found at our Stamp News Now website page, <http://www.stampnewsnow.com/WOPA-NewIssues.html>.

